

LISTING OF THE CLAIMS

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of providing access to a wireless communications system in which a plurality of nodes in a first set establish wireless links with wireless units located in geographic proximity to said nodes, said method comprising the steps of:

receiving information characterizing usage level of nodes of a second set;
using said information by a node of said first set to determine a first node of said second set with which to connect; and
connecting a said node of ~~said plurality of nodes in~~ said a first set with said first ~~different~~ nodes of said second set.

Claims 2 – 4 are cancelled.

5. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 2 1 further comprising: wherein said using step uses said information characterizing usage levels of the nodes of the second set and information characterizing said node of said first set to determine a node of said second set with which to connect.

6. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 2 1 further comprising: wherein said using step uses said information characterizing usage level of the node of the second set and information characterizing ~~the~~ a wireless unit for which a connection is being established.

7. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein said step of connecting further comprising:
~~connecting a node of said first set with a first node of said second set; and~~
connecting said node of said first set with a second node of said second set.

8. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein said step of connecting further comprising:

connecting ~~a~~said node of said first set with ~~a~~ said first node of said second set for establishing a connection with a first wireless unit; and

connecting said node of said first set with a second node of said second set for establishing a connection with a second wireless unit.

9. (Cancelled).

10. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~9~~ 1 comprising the steps of:

receiving information by said node of said first set from said nodes of said second set using a multicast address associated with said nodes of said second set;

maintaining a list by said node of said first set of nodes of said second set based on said information; and

using said list by said node of said first set to determine said first node of said second set with which to connect.

11. (Currently Amended) A radio access system in a wireless communications system comprising:

a plurality of nodes in a first set adapted to establish wireless links with wireless units located in geographic proximity to said nodes;

a connection network coupled to said plurality of nodes of said first set; ~~and~~

a plurality of nodes of a second set coupled to said connection network adapted to provide connections between a node of said plurality of nodes of said first set and said plurality of nodes of said second set; and

processing circuitry adapted to receive information characterizing usage levels of the nodes of the second set and to use said information to determine a node of said second set to connect with said node of said first set.

12. (Cancelled)

13. (Cancelled) The system of claim ~~12~~ 11 wherein said processing circuitry adapted to use information characterizing usage level of the nodes of the second set and to use information characterizing nodes of said second set to determine said node of said second set with which to connect.

14. (Cancelled)

15. (Currently Amended) The system of claim ~~12~~ 11 wherein said processing circuitry is adapted to use said information characterizing usage levels of the nodes of the second set and information characterizing said node of said first set to determine said node of said second set.

16. (Currently Amended) The system of claim ~~12~~ 11 wherein said processing circuitry is adapted to use said information characterizing usage levels of the nodes of the second set and information characterizing ~~the~~ a wireless unit for which a connection is being established to determine said node of said second set.

17. (Currently Amended) The system of claim ~~12~~ 11 wherein said radio access system adapted to connect a node of said first set with a first node of said second set and to connect said node of said first set with a second node of said second set.

18. (Currently Amended) The system of claim ~~12~~ 11 wherein said radio access system further adapted to connect a node of said first set with a first node of said second set of base station controllers for establishing a connection with a first wireless unit and to connect said node of said first set with a second node of said second set for establishing a connection with a second wireless unit.

19. (Currently Amended) The system of claim ~~12-11~~ wherein said processing circuitry being at said node of said first set and being adapted to receive information characterizing usage levels of said nodes of said second set and to use said information by said processing circuitry to determine ~~a~~ said node of said second set with which to connect said node of said first set.

20. (Original) The system of claim 19 wherein said processing circuitry further adapted to receive information from nodes of said second set using a multicast address associated with said nodes of said second set, to maintain a list of nodes of said second set based on said information, and to use said list to determine said node of said second set with which to connect said node of said first set.